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~~CIA/CI~~ ~~INSITREP 95-004~~

International Narcotics Review

April 1995

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: JUL 2004

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April 1995

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**International Narcotics
Review**

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Perspective: In Search of an Endgame in Mexico

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**International Narcotics
Review** [redacted]

April 1995

Perspective

In Search of an Endgame in Mexico [redacted]



Mexican traffickers are able to organize quick and secure air transshipment offloads, move cocaine within Mexico with relative ease, successfully transport the drugs across the border into the United States, and collect and move large sums of money back to Colombia.



By emphasizing cohesion and adaptability, the major Mexican narcotics trafficking organizations have been able to build a nationwide transshipment, cultivation, processing, and smuggling network capable of exporting vast quantities of South American cocaine and Mexican heroin and marijuana. Several factors enable the Mexican organizations to thrive:



- *Binding, long-term relationships or kinship ties among an organization's top-level members in Mexico.* These bonds make it easy for trafficking organizations to maintain loyalty and discipline at the leadership level and to shield whatever decisionmaking process may exist from law enforcement investigation. In addition, it is quite common for the major

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traffickers to employ front men or *prestanombres*—frequently well-established and known businessmen—to hide true ownership of businesses and properties.

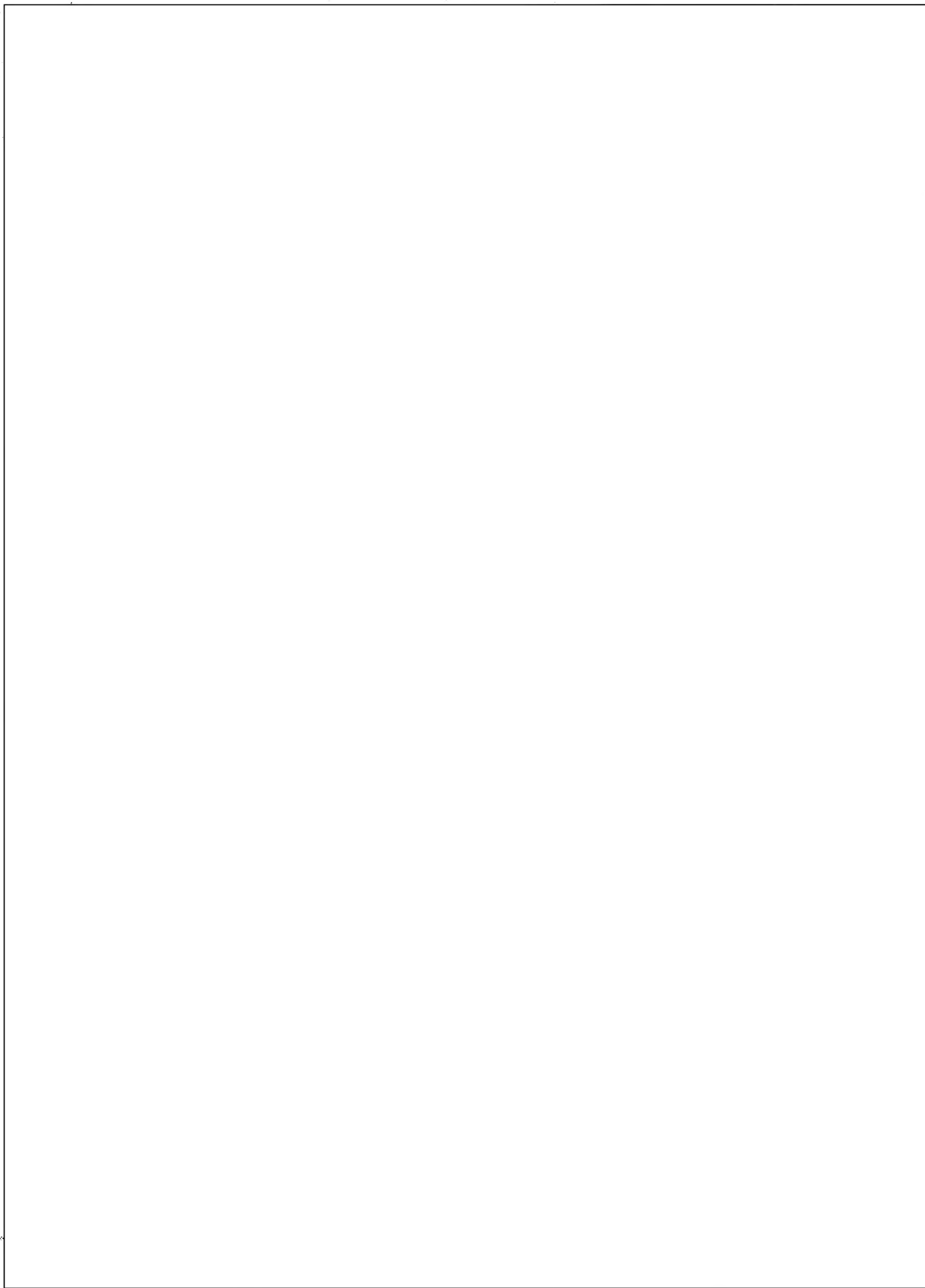
- *Extended family relationships throughout an organization's working levels in Mexico and the United States.* Family bonds provide strong, wide-ranging lines of communication and influence that the Mexican kingpins can readily exploit.
- *Complex operational structures and methods that defy simple categorization.* The extensive interconnecting and overlapping structure of traffickers capable of working separately, jointly, or interchangeably enables them to minimize the effects of government antidrug efforts. Depending on the situation, the organization can be made to appear and to function as a confederation of separate but closely aligned organizations, a tight cluster of mutually dependent franchises, or a single large network accountable to one man. [REDACTED]

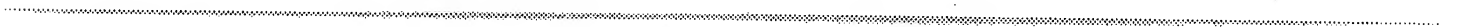
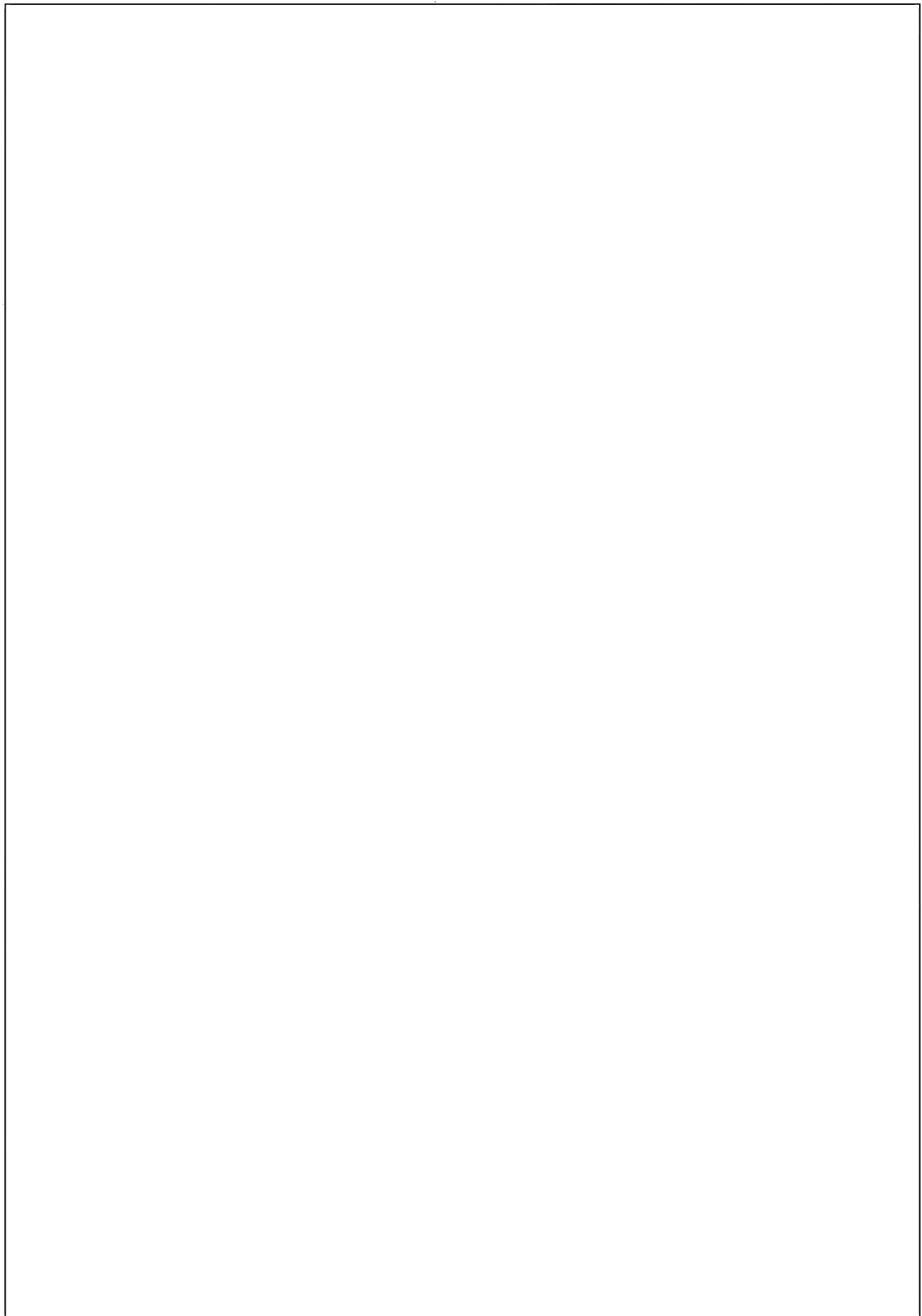
In addition to their use of corruption and versatile organizational makeup, Mexican trafficking organizations have not hesitated to resort to violence to protect their activities from law enforcement or from rivals. For example, Amado Carrillo Fuentes's relatively swift rise to prominence was based largely on family connections, his ability to exploit opportunities created by the deaths and arrests of rival traffickers, and willingness to use violence.

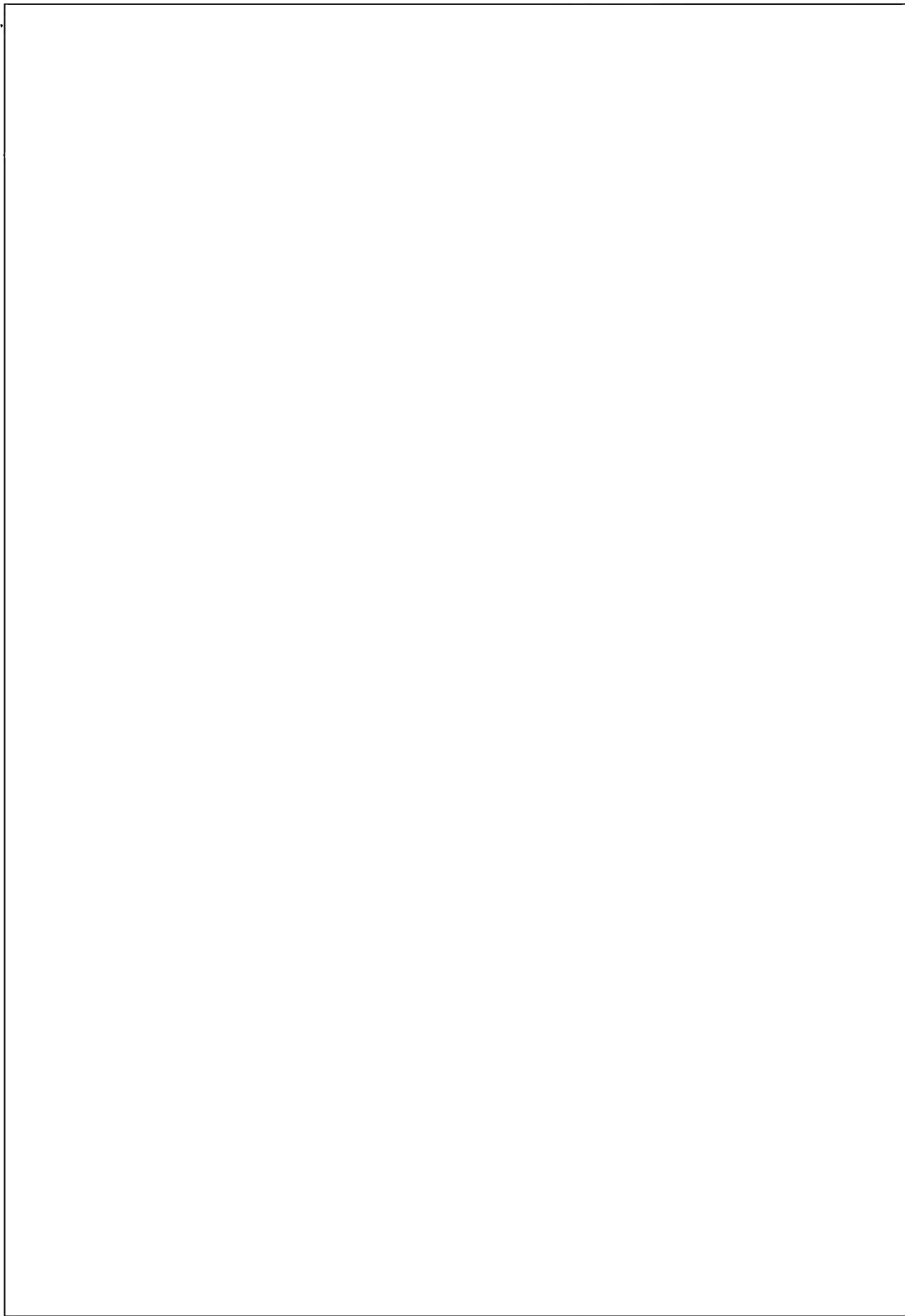
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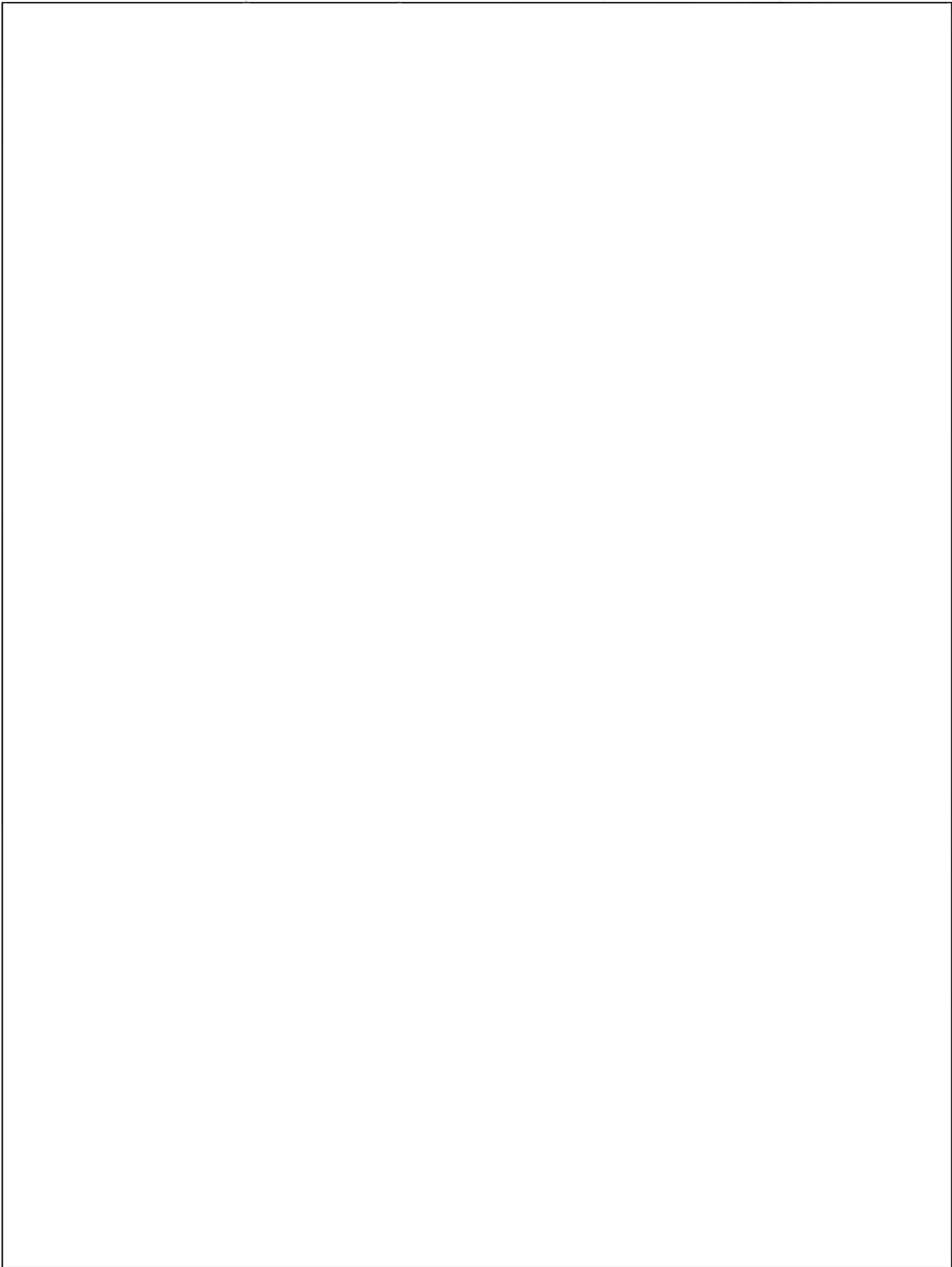
In our view, seizures of multiton drug shipments into Mexico by large jet aircraft will alone not cause significant disruption to the cocaine pipeline into the United States because the traffickers will adapt by using different routes and methods.

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